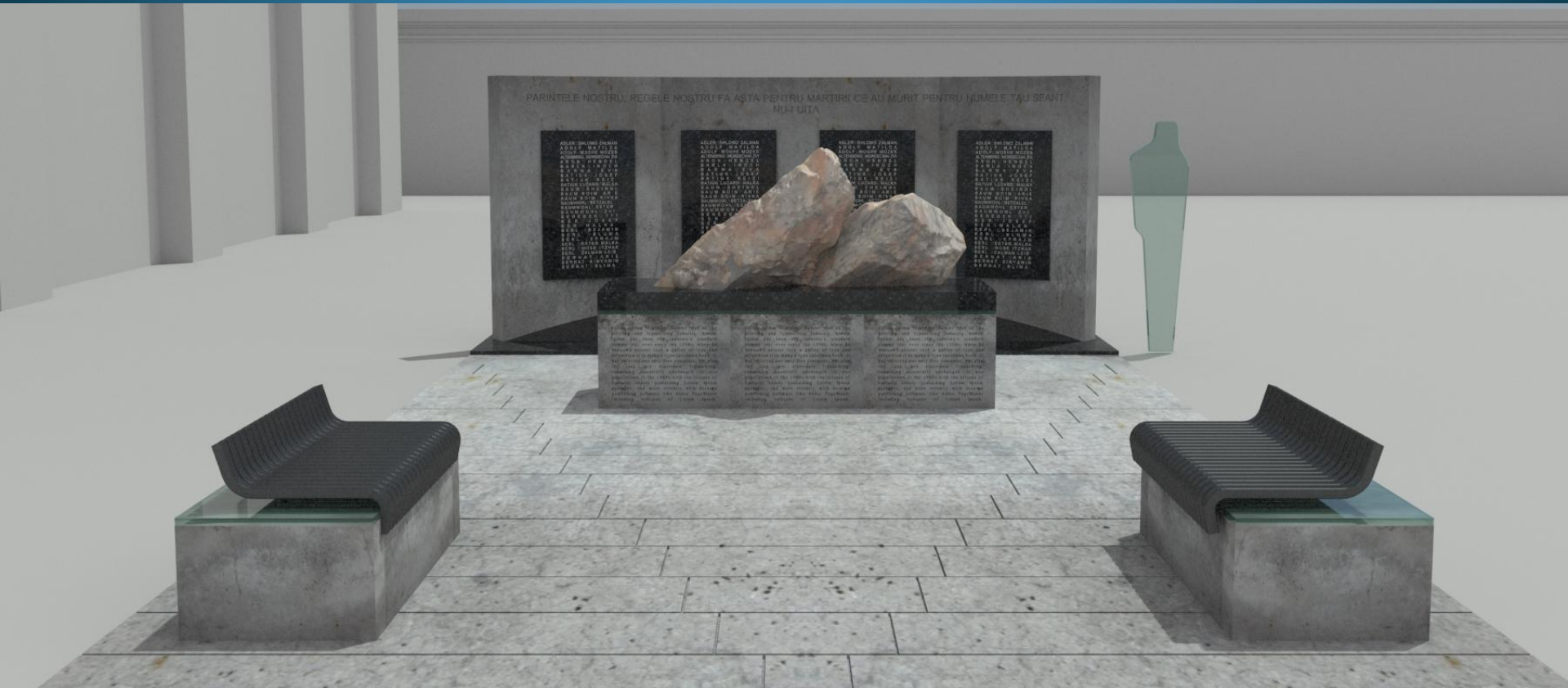


# Gherla Holocaust Memorial and Synagogue Restoration Project



Proposed memorial unveiling planned  
for May 2016

# Current Status of the project

- The project was initiated by the former Jewish residents of Gherla and their descendants.
- The objective of the project is to create a Holocaust Memorial in Gherla and to initiate repair work on the beautiful synagogue. The monument is in honor of the 1,600 Jewish residents that were gathered in the Gherla Ghetto in May 1944 and consequently sent to the Aushwitz-Birkenau death camp.
- Through the hard work of members of the Israeli group of former residents of Gherla, emergency repairs of the synagogue roof have been completed. After decades of neglect, the synagogue is still in need of major repairs and the hope is for the monument to be a catalyst for further renovation of the synagogue.
- After discussions with all parties, a decision was made to place the monument next to the Gherla synagogue, with free and open access to all. The monument will contain the known names of all the Holocaust victims from Gherla and surrounding villages. Currently we have about 900 names gathered from various sources ( Yad Vashem, JewishGen, Yitzkor book).
- The “United States Commission for Preservation of America’s Heritage Abroad” has agreed to support the project and provide a venue for tax deductible contributions from United States donors.
- An initial design of the Gherla Holocaust Memorial Monument was completed. The design is based on ideas of a Mihai Eisikovici, a Gherla Holocaust survivor and architect Dominic Teleki, descendant of a Holocaust victim from Gherla.
- A local architectural firm has been engaged to obtain all the necessary technical and legal approvals for the construction of the monument and modification to the synagogue fence .
- The planned completion date for the monument is expected to be in May 2016

# How can you help?

We need your financial help to build the Gherla Holocaust Monument and to perform repairs to the Gherla Synagogue. A special account has been set up at the "United States Commission for Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad". All contributions are 100% tax deductible.

**Donations by check** can be sent to the address below – made out to "United States Commission for Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad" with a note that it is for: **Gherla Holocaust Memorial and Synagogue Restoration project** – and should be sent to:

Michael Klein  
7400 Bradley Blvd  
Bethesda, MD 20817, USA

For additional information call  
**Mike Klein at 240-472-0180**  
or email him at:  
[\*\*klein49@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:klein49@gmail.com)





# Historical Background of Jewish life in Gherla

Early references to the settlement of Gherla date back to 1442 and already at that time included a fledgling Jewish community. In 1700 with the approval of Holy Roman Emperor Lepold I in Vienna, a city was founded at Gherla and its name became Szamosujvar in Hungarian. Jews were only permitted to live in the small villages surrounding the actual city. One of the nearby villages called Iclod had a Jewish community as early as 1755. Many of the Jews that lived in Iclod and surrounding villages were working in the city during the day. Over the years, Jewish businesses helped the area develop into a regional economic center.

After the revolution of 1848, Jews were allowed to live in the city of Szamosujvar. By 1903 there were multiple small synagogues operating in the city. That year a large and elaborate synagogue was built to accommodate the increasing Jewish population. Jewish religious and cultural life flourished, especially thanks to the construction of the new synagogue.

The city came under Romanian jurisdiction at the end of the First World War in 1918. The Jewish population of Gherla before the Second World War was around 1,000, representing about 12-15% of the total population of the city. Jewish businesses were a major contributor to the economic development of the city between the two world wars. The Jewish population lived in relative harmony with their Romanian, Hungarian and Armenian neighbors in Gherla. All that changed on August 28, 1940 when Transylvania was partitioned and the city became part of Hungary. In the spring of 1944 after the Germans entered Hungary, the Jews of Gherla and surrounding villages were gathered in the Gherla Ghetto. The approximately **1600** Jews of the Gherla ghetto were sent in cattle cars to the ghetto of Cluj. From Cluj they were all sent to the German concentration camps of Auschwitz/Birkenau. When the war ended, only **40** returned back to Gherla, the vast majority perished in the Holocaust.

For a few years after the war the synagogue saw a revival of Jewish life. Those that returned formed new families and were joined by newcomers from other areas of the country. After the formation of the Jewish state, many of the Jews of Gherla emigrated to Israel. During the next decades, religious life under the new communist regime was barely tolerated, so most of the Jews of Gherla left the country. Today there is only one observant Jewish family in the city.